

MARBLE DOES NOT MELT

by **THEODORICO[©]**
NAPOLITANO
GANSEN

PRESS RELEASE

MARBLE DOES NOT MELT is a sculpture by architect and artist Theodorico Napolitano that transforms a visual paradox into an ironic yet powerful reflection on our time.

The artwork depicts a marble popsicle carved from statuary marble, shown in the impossible act of melting. A suspended image that overturns the laws of matter and opens up a narrative oscillating between personal memory and collective awareness.

“Marble does not melt, and yet today we could melt it, at least visually.

The infinite veining and juxtapositions of this extraordinary material, sometimes almost phosphorescent and alive, remind me of my childhood indecision when faced with the many different flavors of popsicles,” says the artist.

Through the contrast between the eternal hardness of marble and the fragility implied by melting, the work evokes a question that is both simple and unsettling: is our planet melting?

A question the artist does not attempt to answer, instead entrusting it to the viewer’s gaze, transforming inevitable human helplessness into a seductive and deliberately ambiguous image.

“The hardness of marble encounters inevitable human impotence.

And yet, this tragic helplessness, when dressed in the veining of beautiful marble and illuminated in the right way, can become captivating, perhaps even amusing.

I would define it as an ironic cry toward an awareness of the absurd.”

“MARBLE DOES NOT MELT” thus presents itself as an artwork that both seduces and destabilizes, transforming a tragic reflection into an aesthetic experience capable of attracting the eye and stimulating a critical reading of the present.

As a testament to the cultural and symbolic value of the project, “MARBLE DOES NOT MELT” has been included among the initiatives of the Milano Cortina 2026 Cultural Olympiad, becoming part of the multidisciplinary, inclusive, and nationwide program that will animate Italy in the lead-up to the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, to be held from 6 to 22 February and from 6 to 15 March 2026 respectively.

The exhibition marks a significant moment in the artistic journey of Theodorico Napolitano and will be held at the ADI Design Museum, Piazza Compasso d’Oro 1, Milan, from 2 February to 29 March 2026, placing his research within one of the most symbolic venues of Italian design and cultural innovation.

The marble shaping “MARBLE DOES NOT MELT”, carefully selected for its extraordinary veining and timeless quality, comes from the generous production of MILGEM, a historic name in the marble and granite industry. The artwork will be enhanced by a lighting design by Martinelli Luce, conceived to highlight every detail of the sculpture, the depth of its volumes and its scenic presence, creating a perfect dialogue between matter and light.

www.theodoriconapolitano.com



MARBLE DOES NOT MELT – IL MARMO NON SI SCIOGLE

In the beginning there was the popsicle. Democratic because it is low – cost. Cheerful because a range of bright colors highlights its different flavors. Even educational, because it teaches children that time passes, eroding the compact shape that rises from the stick. Soon, children, reality will melt in your small hands, and you must learn to count even the drops that would otherwise be lost. Time is a tyrant: it looms over human destinies, and like a popsicle, the snowy glacier also slowly dies. Many suggestions surround the most popular ice cream. But we set them aside, because the artist Theodorico Napolitano's choice to elevate a summer treat into a monolith of considerable size (the work measures two meters in height and will be placed on a pedestal) forces us onto deeper and more intriguing cognitive paths. Around the world there are only a handful of monoliths. We are particularly reminded of dolmens and of the stone guests at the banquet of Stonehenge: guardians of cultures far distant in time. Even today, they seem to speak to us in their secret language, around which we quarrel, proposing the most bizarre hypotheses. Monoliths stand there in their superb uniqueness, imbued with something almost divine. Before a work of art made of a single solid piece, we are compelled to look from below upward. We are like the apes in Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey: noisy, scatterbrained, circling that mysterious signal – the powerful black slab – until they realize, in their own way, that they are intelligent, and that the gift that seems to come from above can immediately be used to attack one another. The monolith in Milan, set within its carefully tended urban context and opening the way to the Winter Games – the Milano Cortina Olympics – admonishes and exalts us at the same time. Sporting competitions are a conquest of civilization: we contemporary apes should abandon weapons and pursue only the healthy primacy of the various disciplines that take place on snow (it was a brilliant idea of my dear friend Mario Soldati to replace war with football matches). We must look upward, to our mountains – an invaluable good that must be preserved from the offenses of climate change. Theodorico Napolitano is not joking: this is not an ephemeral divertimento. He has chosen to express himself in a most noble material, statuary marble, favored since ancient Rome for sculptural art. Versatile to the chisel and almost hypnotic to the eye, which gets lost in the tangle of its veins, statuary marble stands as a solid certainty when compared to the easy perishability of other materials used by contemporary artists. Installation or monument? Both at once – provided that we, contemporary apes, learn to make use of that mysterious signal at the heart of the block. Our very survival is at stake.

In principio fu il ghiacciolo. Democratico perché a basso costo. Allegro perché una gamma di colori accesi ne evidenzia i diversi gusti. Persino educativo, perché insegna ai bambini che il tempo passa, erodendo la forma compatta che svetta sul bastoncino. Presto, bambini, la realtà si scioglierà nelle vostre piccole mani e dovrete imparare a contare anche le gocce che altrimenti andrebbero perdute. Il tempo è un tiranno: incombe sui destini umani e, come un ghiacciolo, anche il candido ghiacciaio lentamente muore. Molte suggestioni circondano il gelato più popolare. Ma le mettiamo da parte, perché la scelta dell'artista Theodorico Napolitano di elevare un dolce estivo a monolite di dimensioni considerevoli (l'opera misura due metri di altezza ed è collocata su un piedistallo) ci costringe a percorrere sentieri cognitivi più profondi e intriganti. Nel mondo esistono solo pochi monoliti. Pensiamo in particolare ai dolmen e agli ospiti di pietra del banchetto di Stonehenge: custodi di culture lontanissime nel tempo. Ancora oggi sembrano volerci parlare nel loro linguaggio segreto, attorno al quale continuiamo a discutere formulando le ipotesi più bizzarre. I monoliti stanno lì, nella loro superba unicità, carica di qualcosa di quasi divino. Di fronte a un'opera d'arte costituita da un unico blocco compatto, siamo costretti a guardare dal basso verso l'alto. Siamo come le scimmie nel film di Stanley Kubrick 2001: Odissea nello spazio: rumorose, distratte, che girano attorno a quel segnale misterioso – la potente lastra nera – fino a quando comprendono, a modo loro, di essere intelligenti e che quel dono, apparentemente calato dall'alto, può essere immediatamente usato per aggredirsi a vicenda. Il monolite di Milano, inserito in un contesto urbano attentamente curato e proiettato verso i Giochi Invernali – le Olimpiadi Milano Cortina – ci ammonisce e ci esalta allo stesso tempo. Le competizioni sportive sono una conquista della civiltà: noi scimmie contemporanee dovremmo rinunciare alle armi per perseguire soltanto il sano primato delle diverse discipline che si svolgono sulla neve (fu una brillante idea del mio caro amico Mario Soldati sostituire la guerra con le partite di calcio). Dobbiamo guardare in alto, verso le nostre montagne, un bene inestimabile che deve essere preservato dalle offese del cambiamento climatico. Theodorico Napolitano non scherza: la sua non è un'effimera divagazione. Ha scelto di esprimersi attraverso un materiale nobilissimo, il marmo statuario, prediletto fin dall'antica Roma per l'arte scultorea. Duttile allo scalpello e quasi ipnotico per lo sguardo che si perde nell'intreccio delle sue venature, il marmo statuario rappresenta una certezza solida se confrontato con la facile deperibilità di altri materiali utilizzati dagli artisti contemporanei. Installazione o monumento? Entrambi, allo stesso tempo – a patto che noi, scimmie contemporanee, impariamo a fare uso di quel segnale misterioso che è al cuore del blocco. In gioco c'è la nostra stessa sopravvivenza.

Antonella Amendola

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- Selfish me - Selfish him
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- ABRACADABRA
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- Olympic torch
- Gladéa
- Oralma



Mi, 7 Dic. 2025

Vorrei proprio sapere che ne pensi,
nonna?

Di una scultura a forma di gelato
che si scioglie -

Un monumento di marmo.

Eppure a chi? A te? A Nonno?

Forse, alle Olimpiadi, usciremo
a ferma re tutti insieme il tempo.

Almeno per un attimo -

Forse per un attimo, per un istante,
la nostra pelle compatta, nel
guardare in alto le montagne.

Quindi tei Voi, per compiere
un momento eterno.

A Voi, con noi, per noi

Tutti

Theodorico

Mi, 7 Dic. 2025

I would really like to know what you think,
Grandma?

About a sculpture in the shape of an ice cream
that melts.

A monument of marble.

And yet, for whom? For you? For Grandpa?

Perhaps, at the Olympics, we will manage
to stop time together.

At least for a moment.

Perhaps for a moment, for an instant,
our skin solid, while
looking up at the mountains.

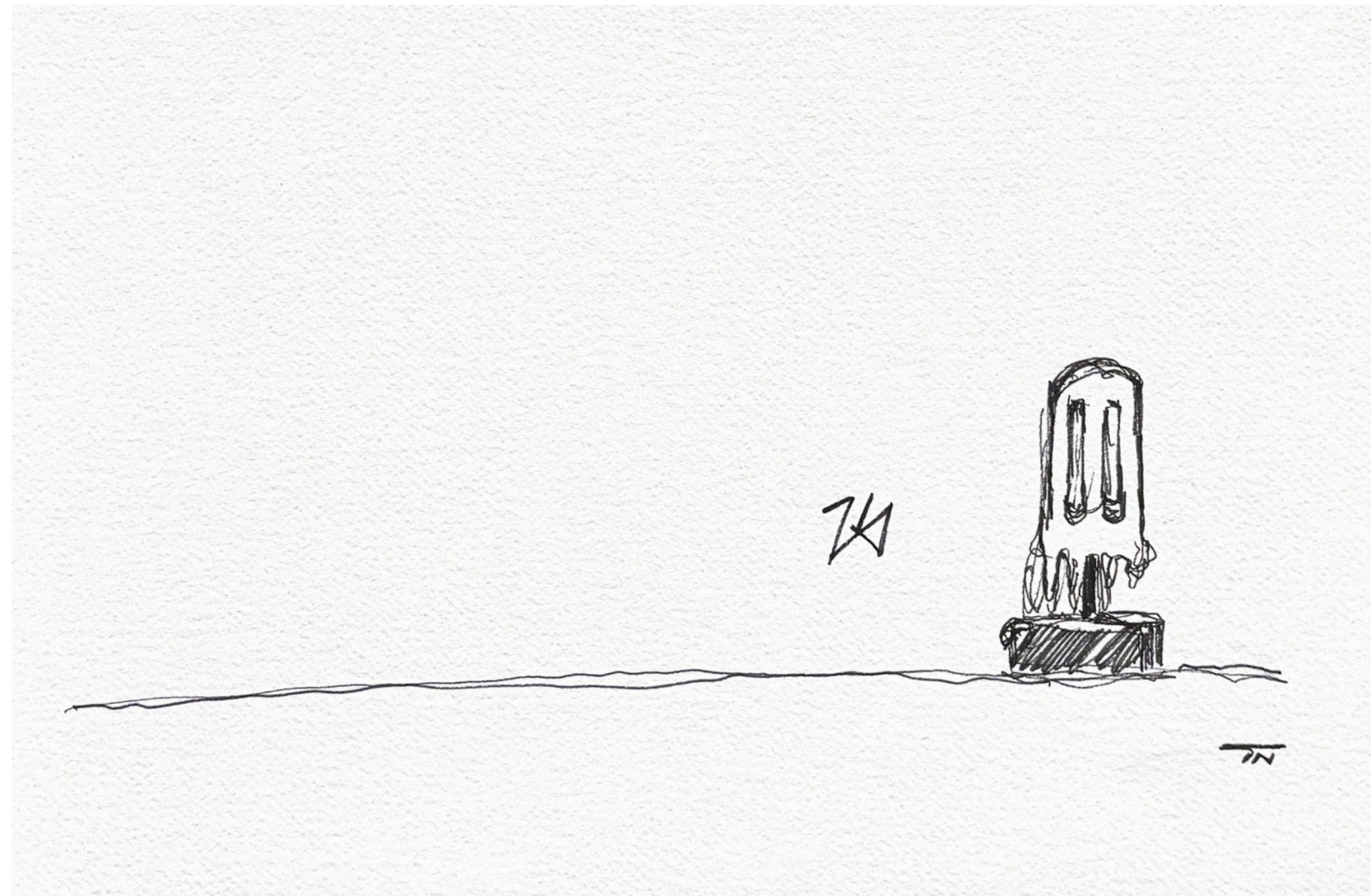
Look at us, to create
an eternal moment.

To You, with us, for all of us.

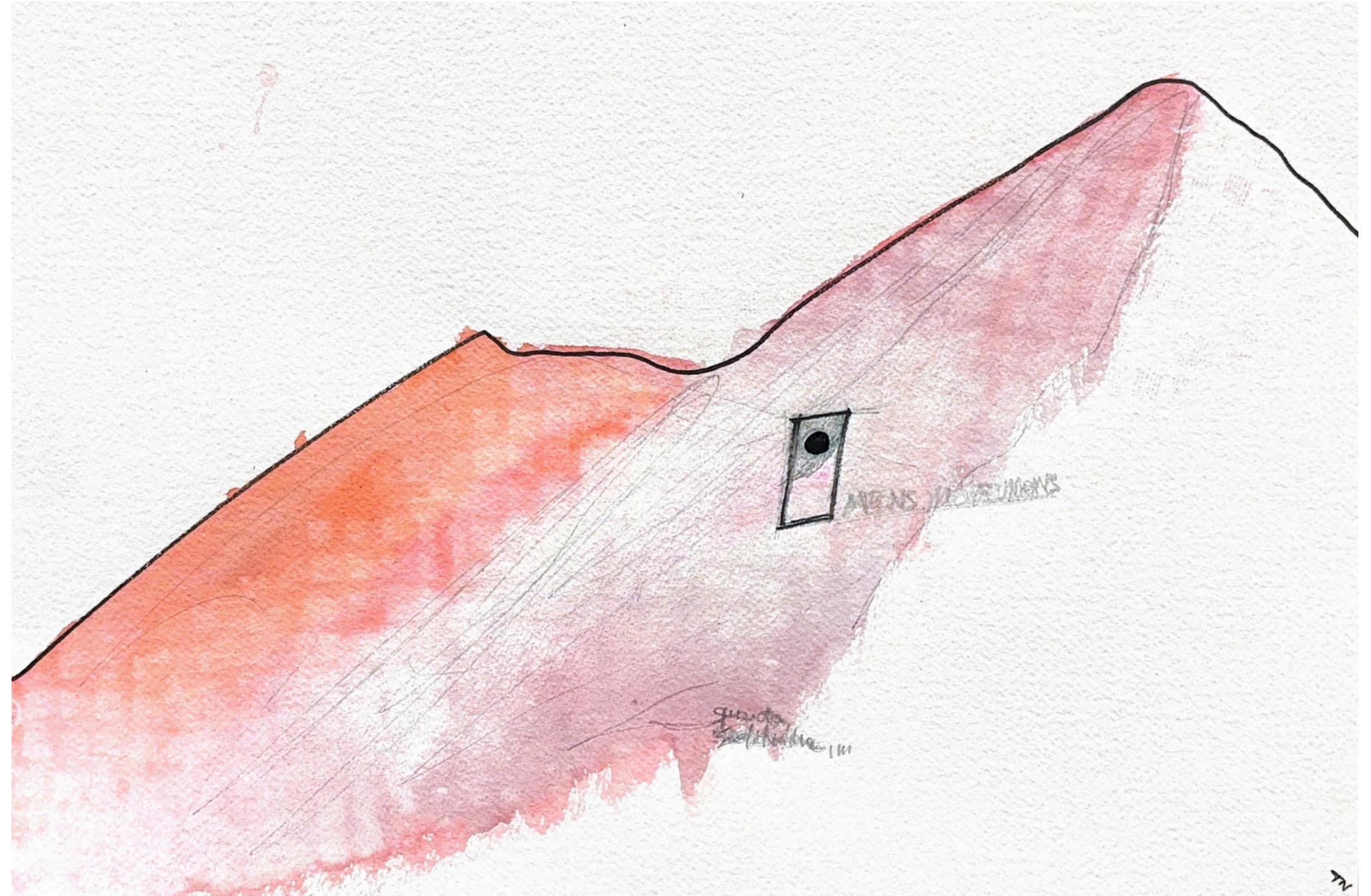
Theodorico

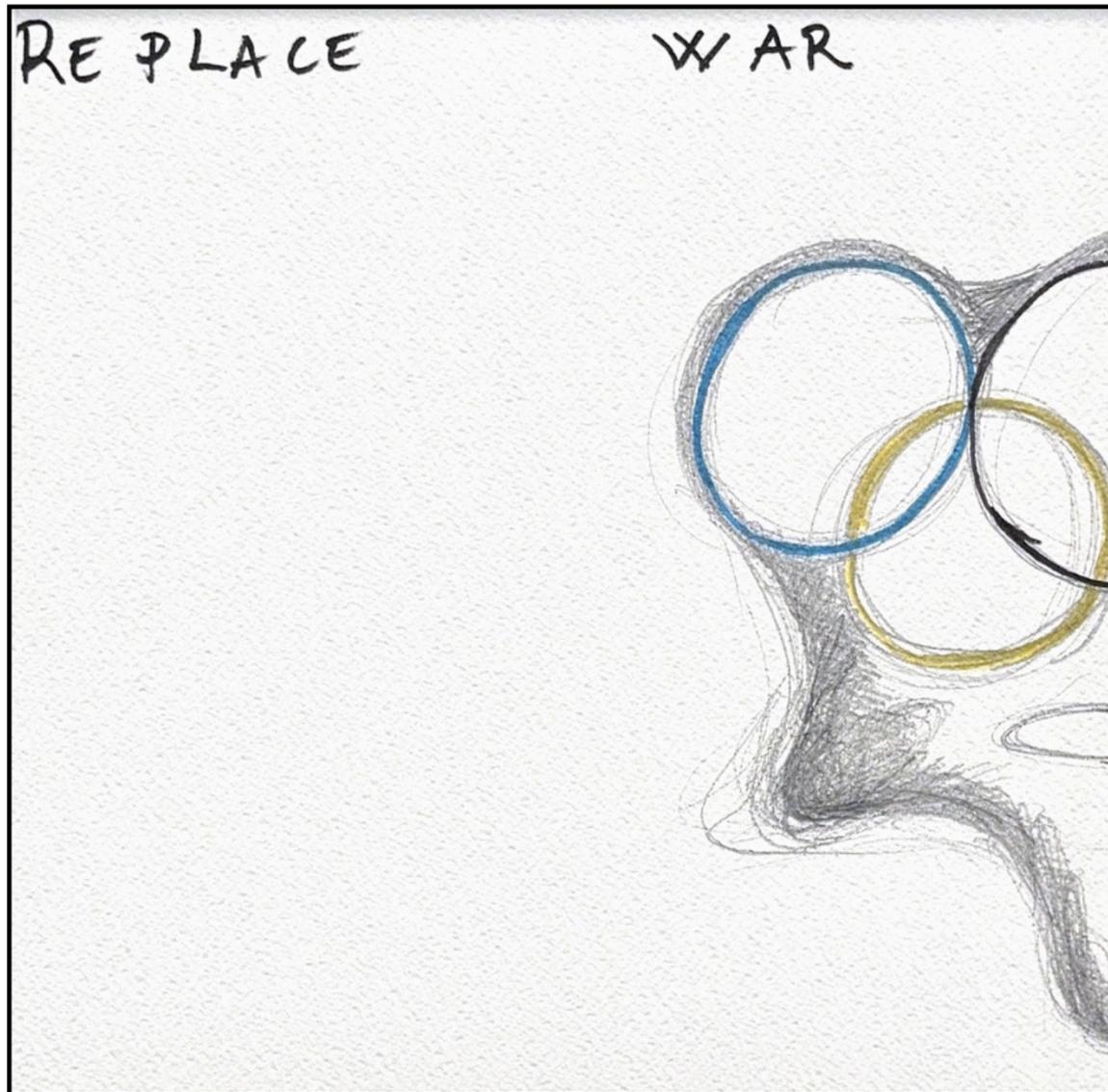
Bonna
Handwritten poem
31x46 cm 300 g/m²

Marble Does Not Melt
Freehand drawing on paper
46 × 31 300 g/m²

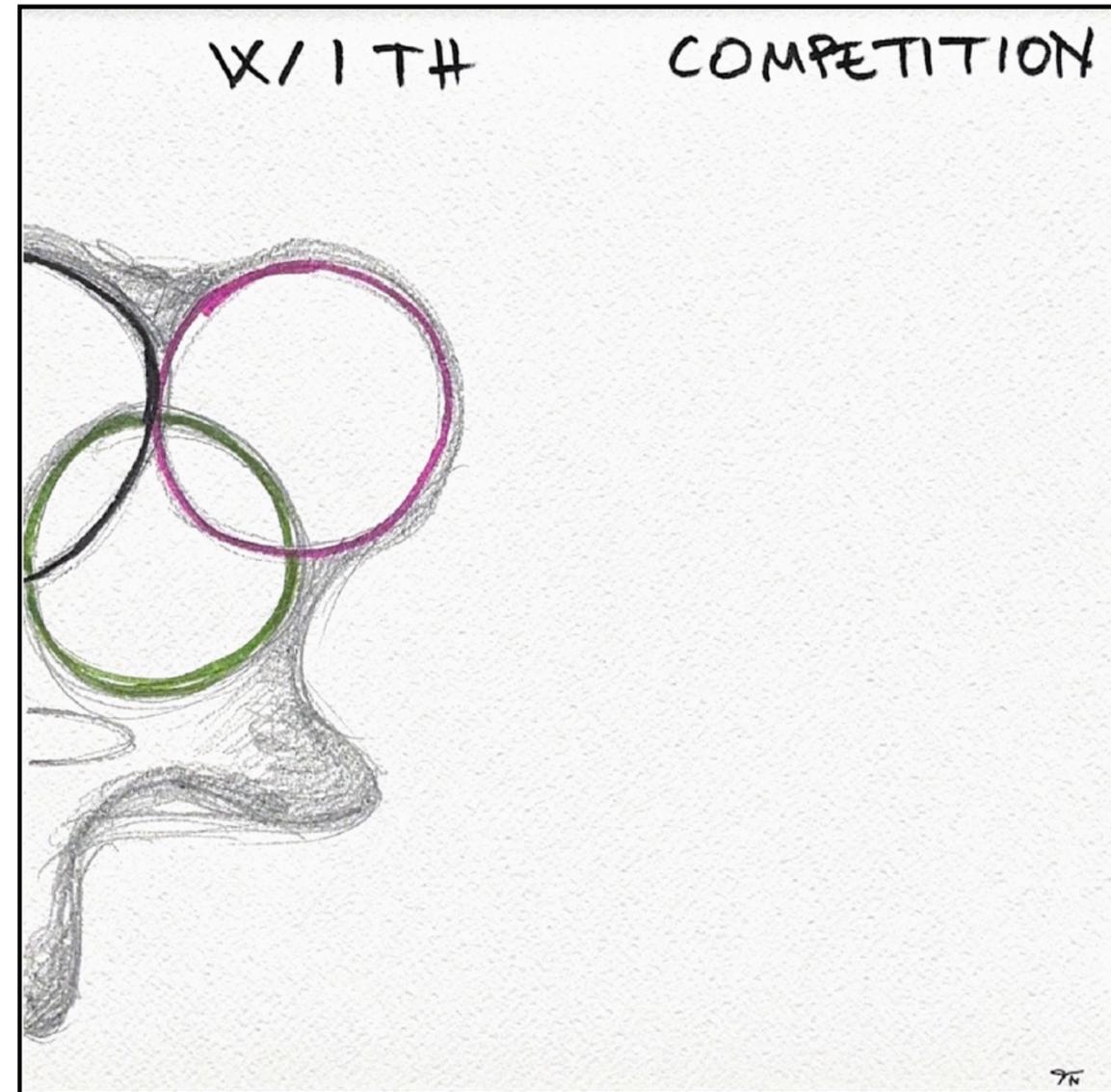


Mons movet montem
Watercolor drawing on paper
46 × 31 cm 300 g/m²





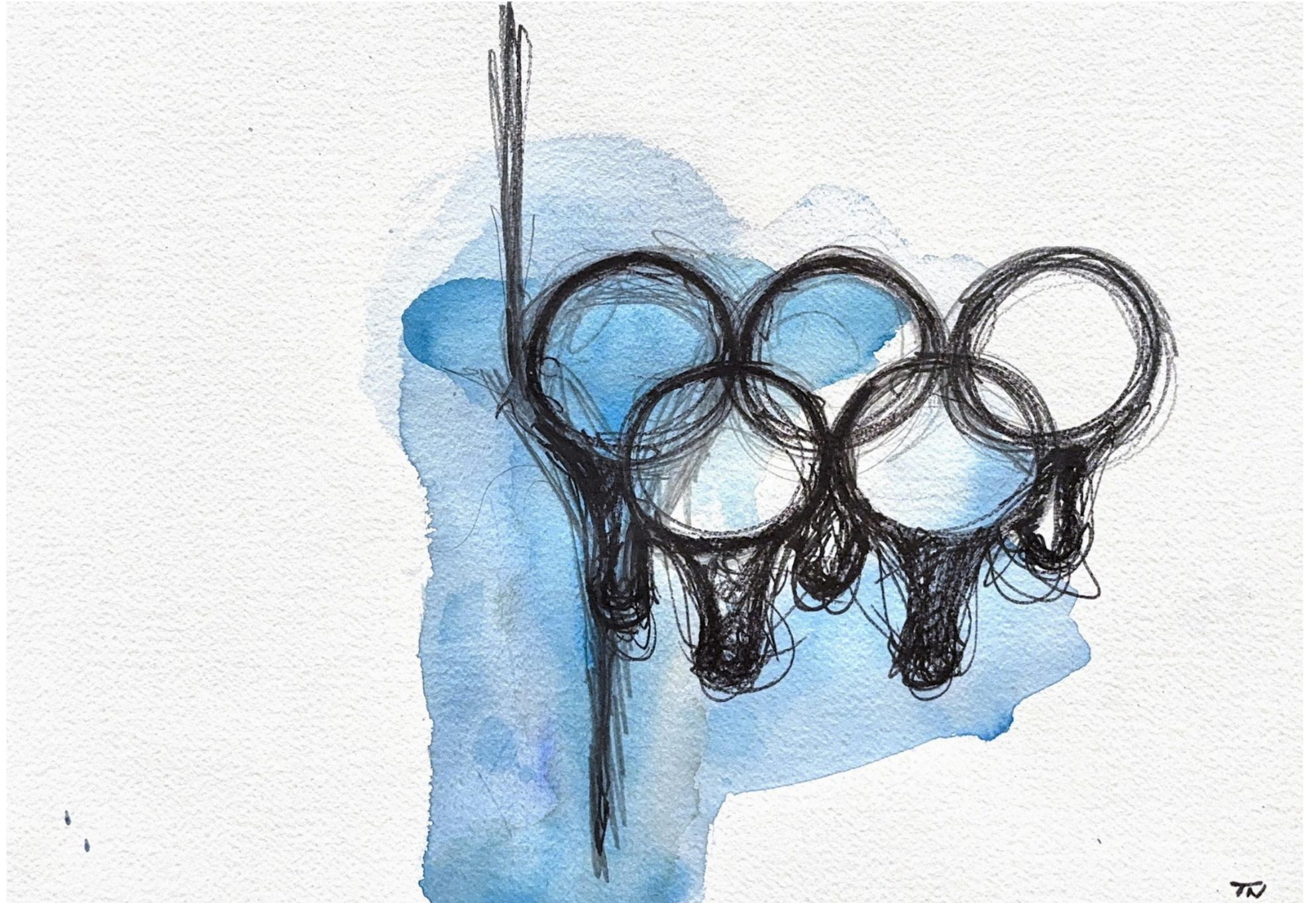
Competition
25 × 25 cm
300 g/m²



Peace
25 × 25 cm
300 g/m²



Melting Paradox
Watercolor on paper
46 × 31 cm
300 g/m²

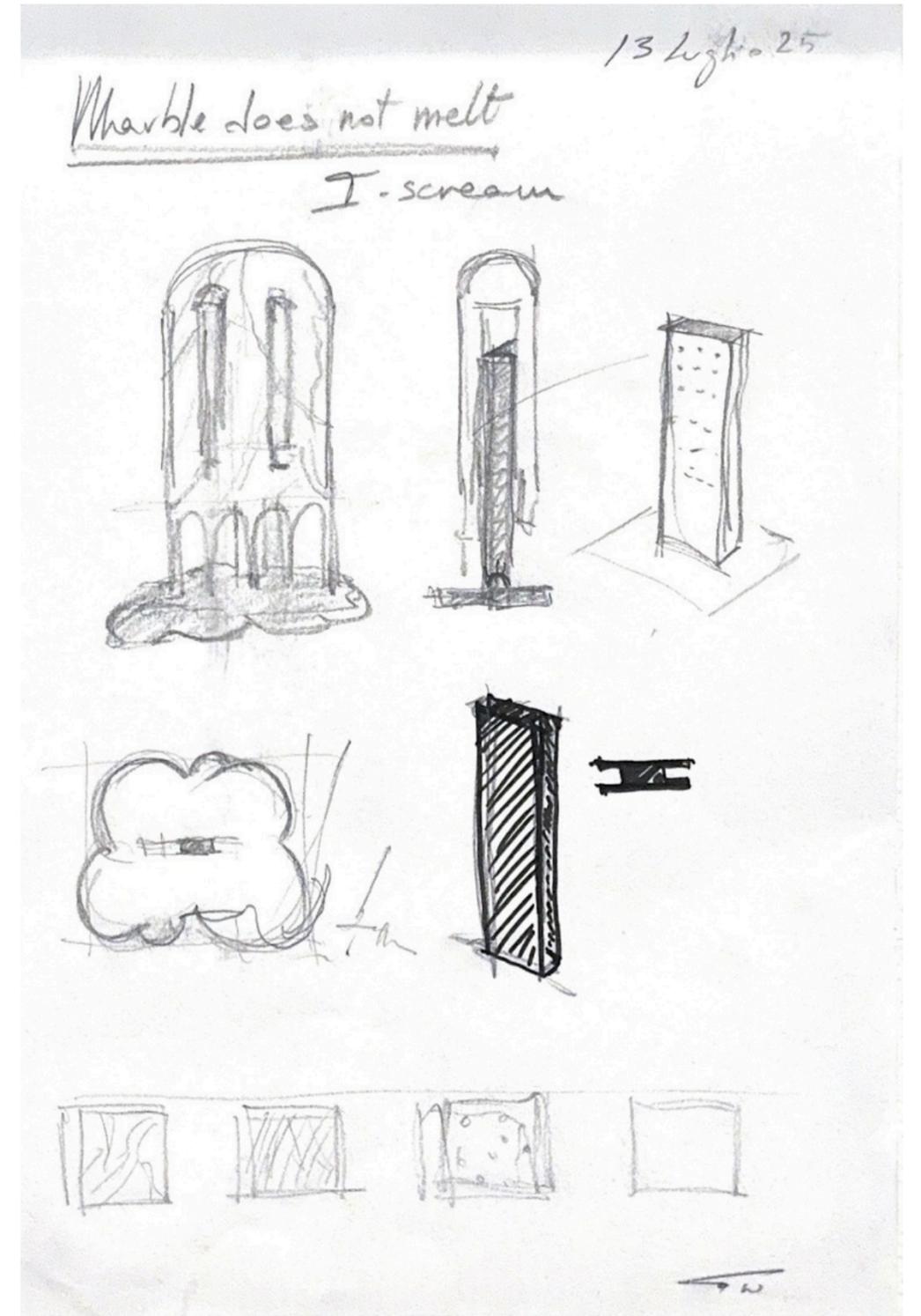


Not the purpose
3D render - cupboard photo-poster
40x40 on polycarb base



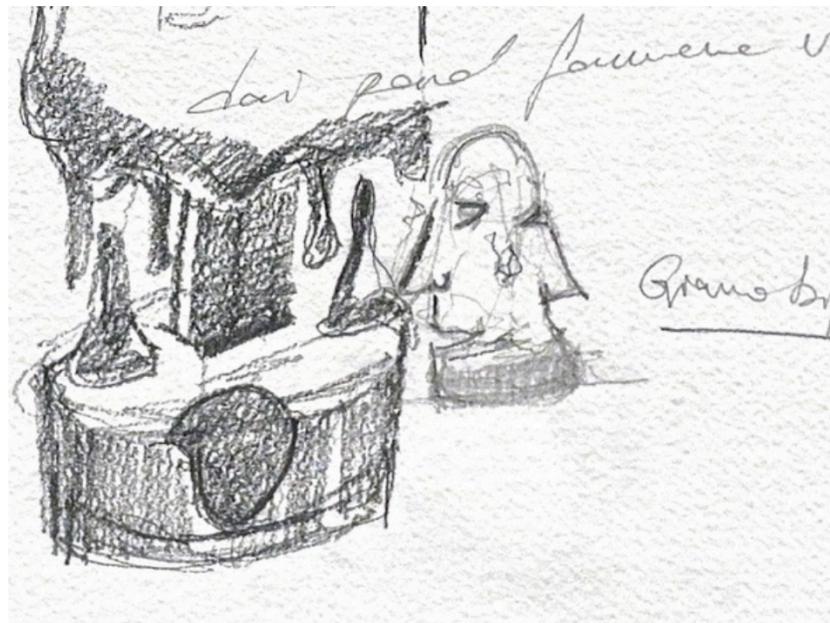
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First sketches
25 x 25 cm 300
g/m²



Paranarcadia
Watercolor on paper
46 × 31 cm
300 g/m²



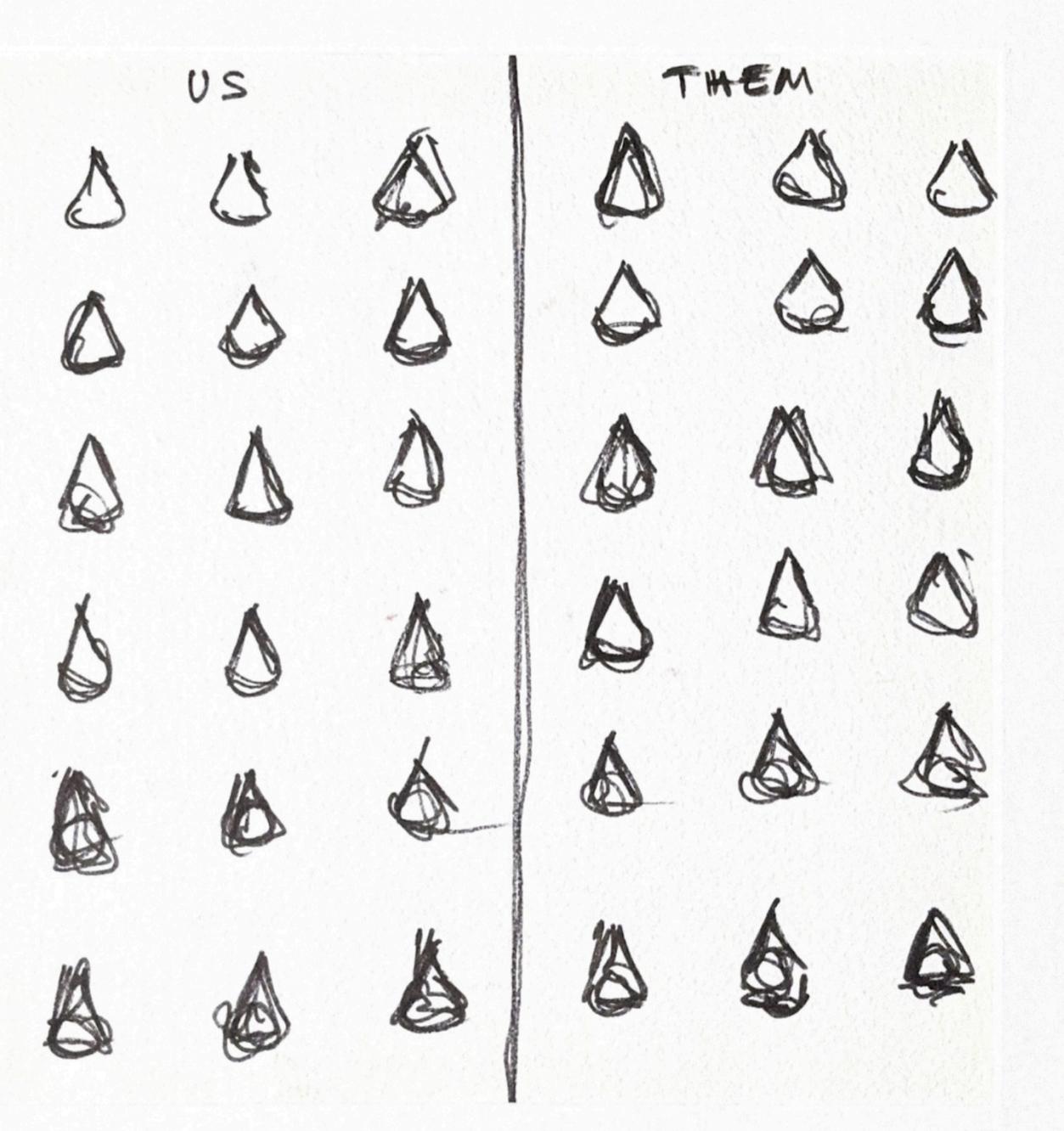


Dancing demons
46 × 31 cm
300 g/m²



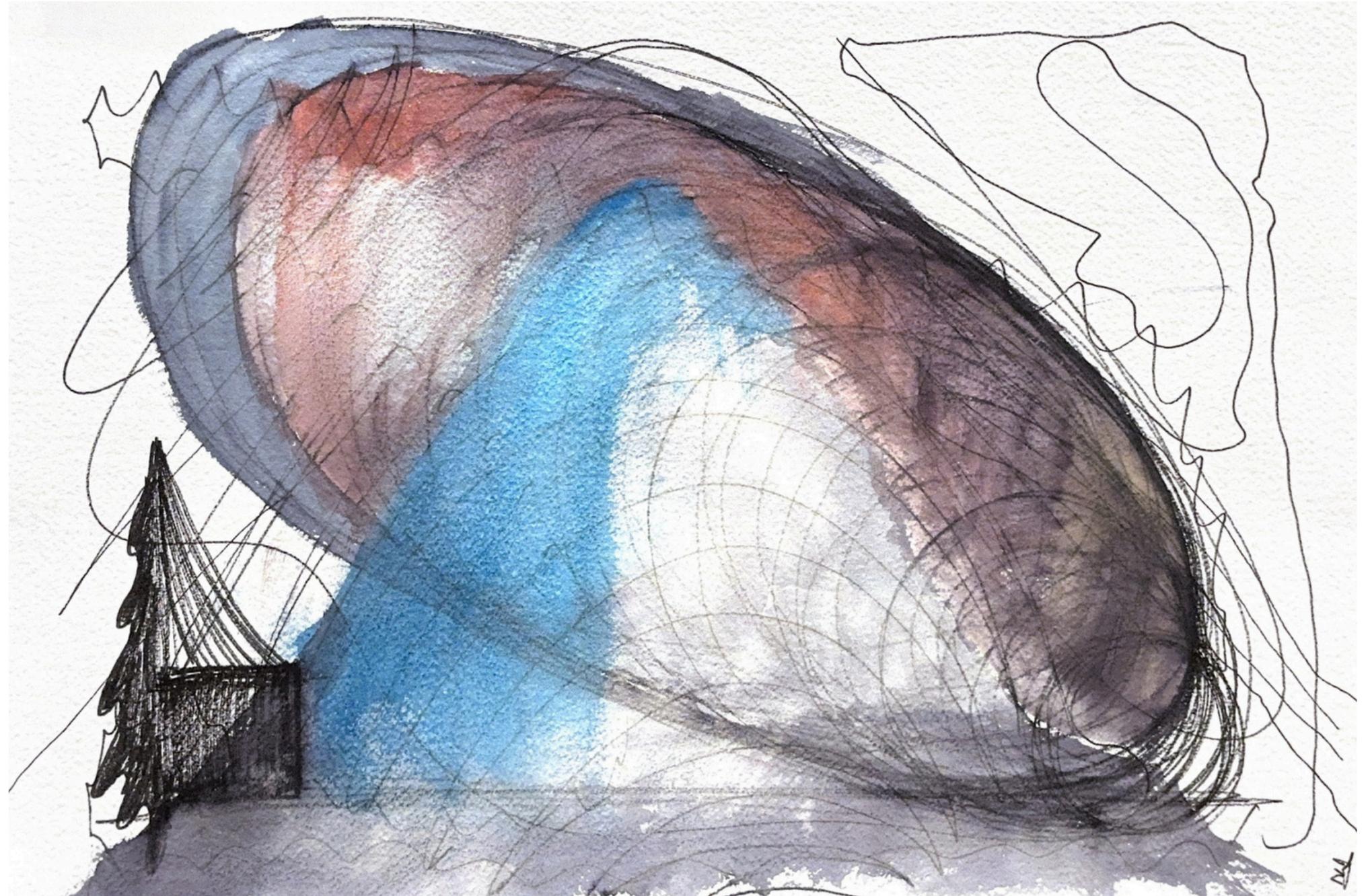


Saganto
Watercolor on paper
46 × 31 cm
300 g/m²



Pretender
Ink on paper
25 × 25 cm 300
g/m²

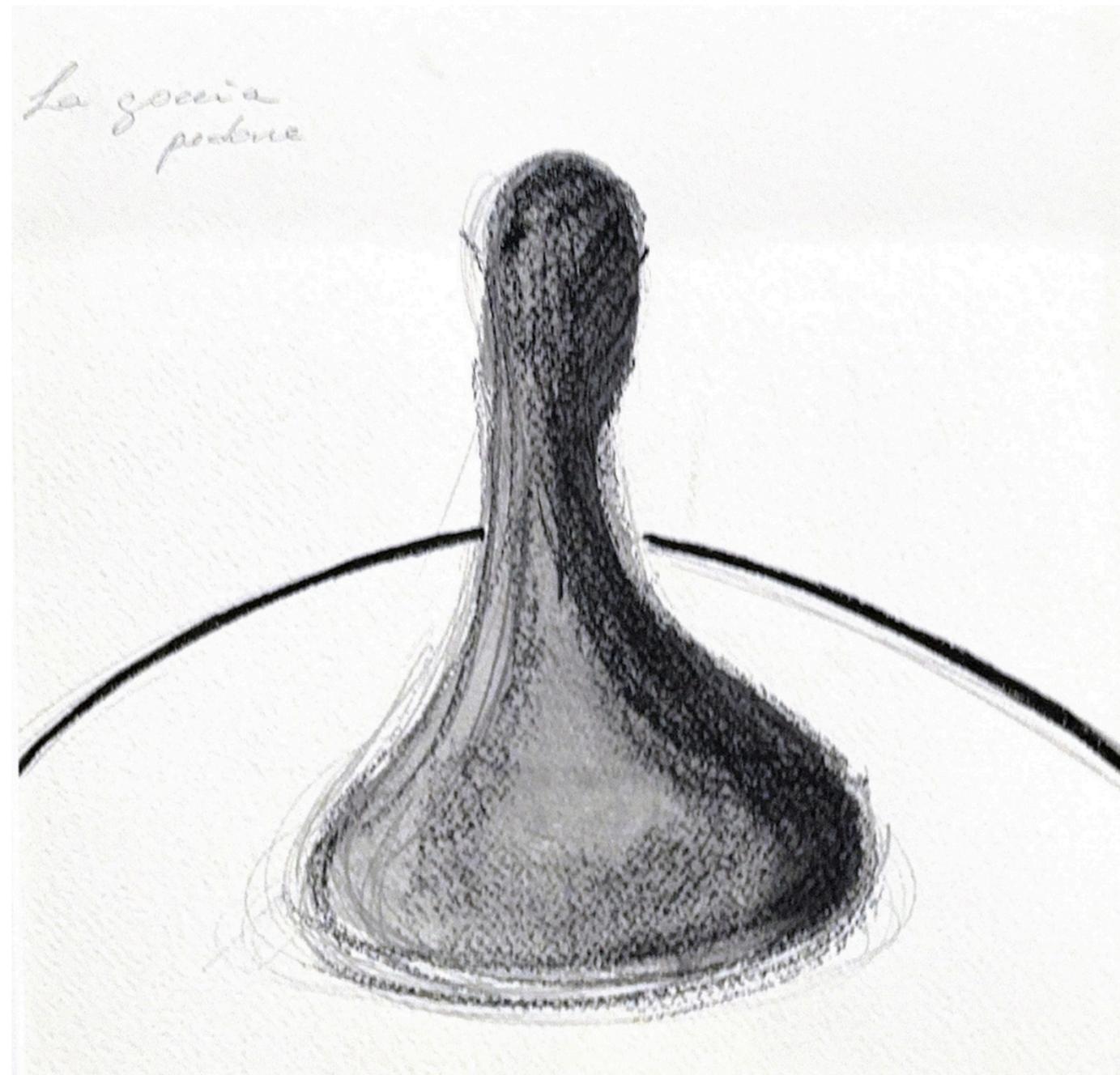
Inner Alp
Watercolor on paper
46 × 31 cm
300 g/m²

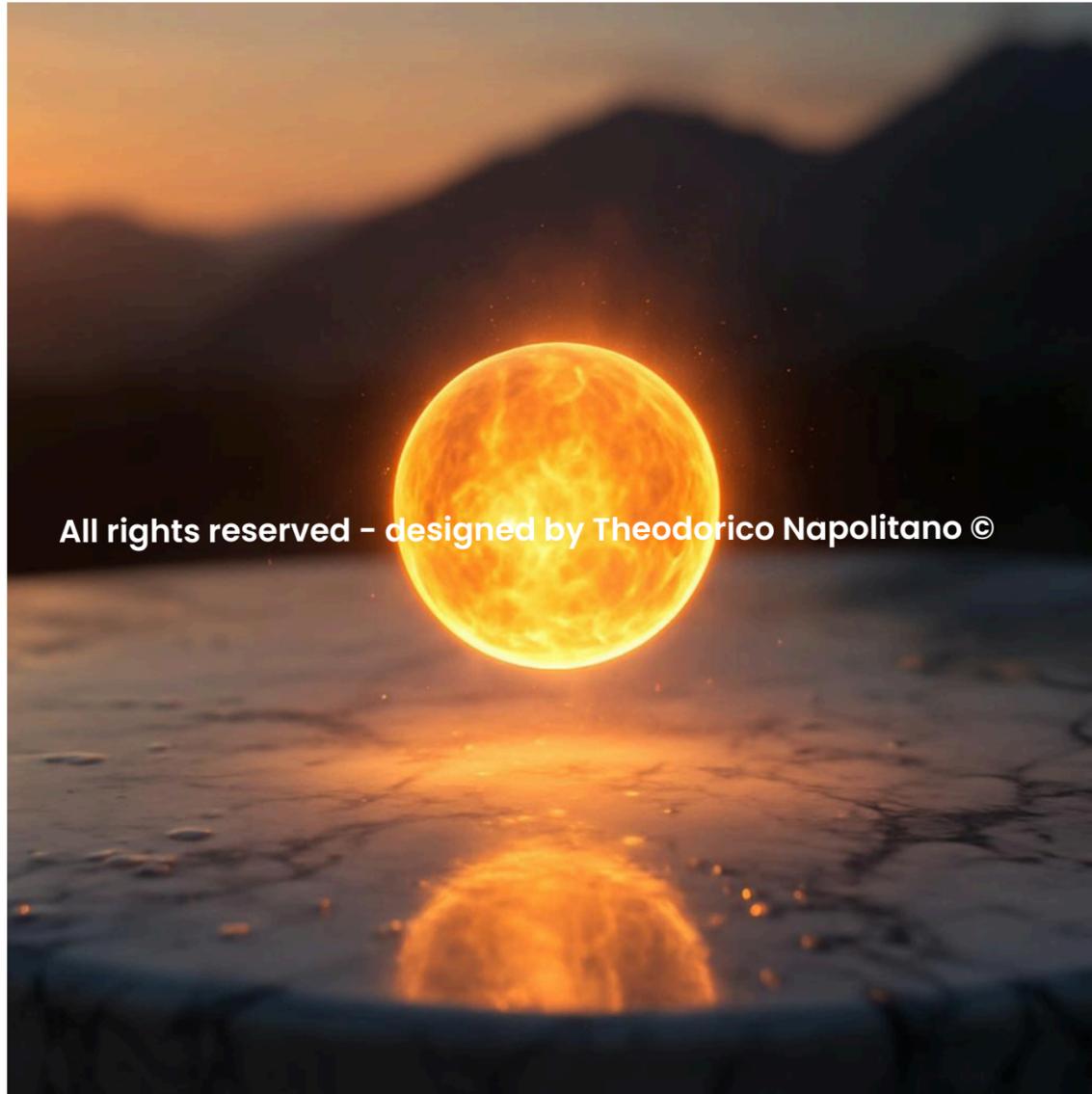


Enadìa
Watercolor and lapis on
300gr paper 210 mm x 297 mm



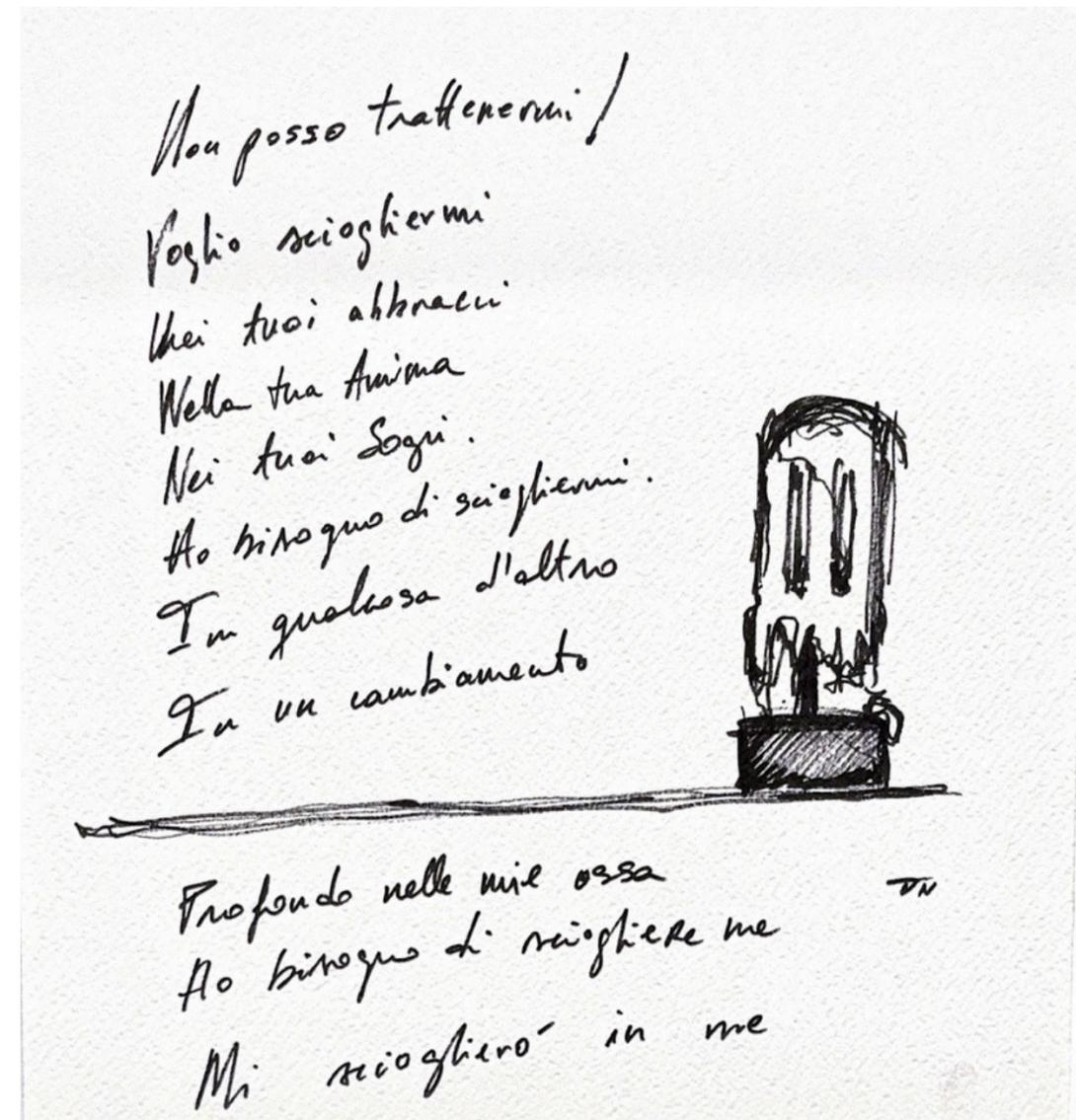
La goccia pedone
25 × 25 cm
300 g/m²





Desiderio

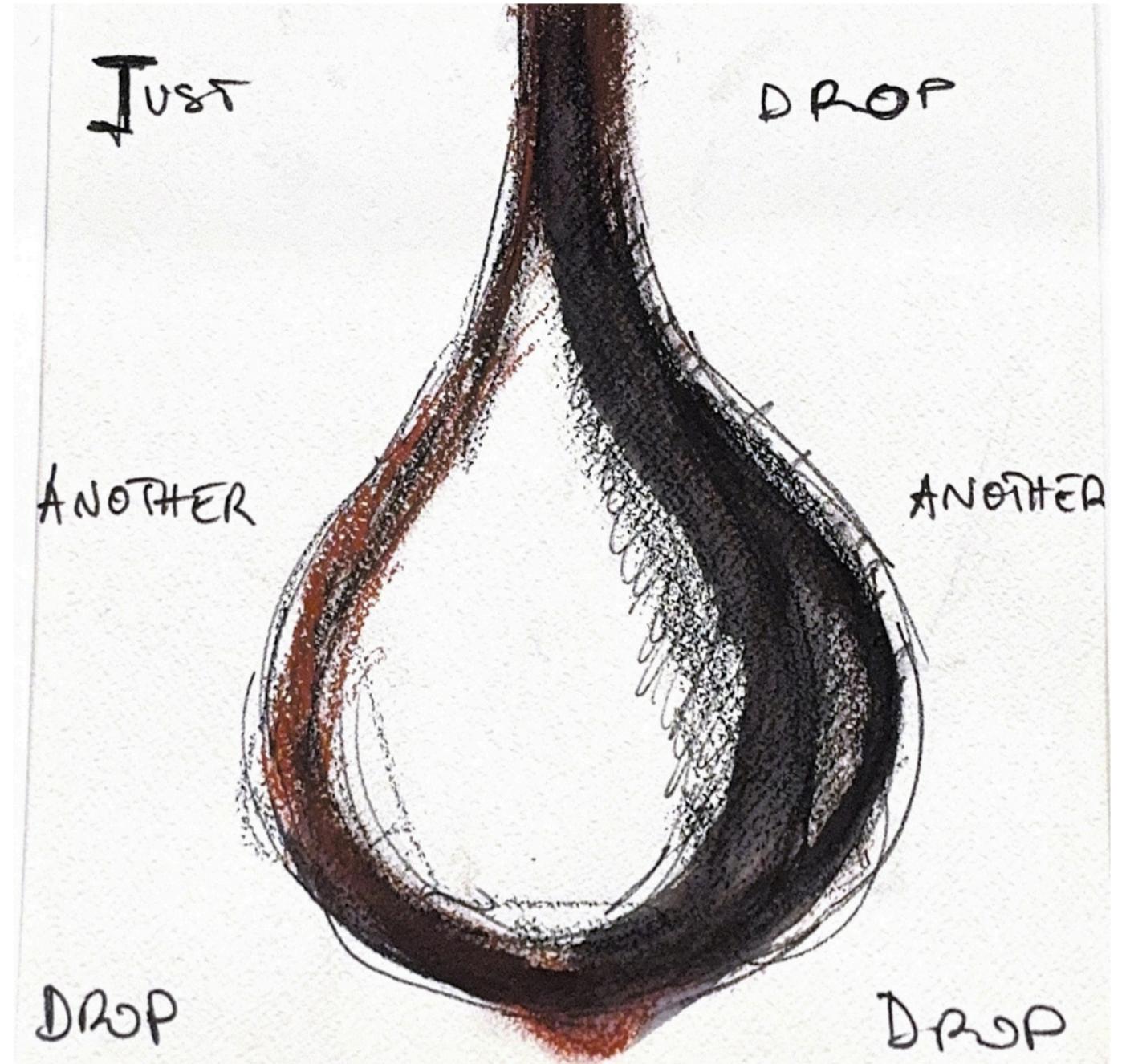
3D render - Cupboard in foamed polycarbonate - photo poster
40x40



Confession

25 x 25 cm
300 g/m²

Everybody knows
ink on paper
25 × 25 cm
300 g/m²



Giglio
ink and watercolor on paper
300 g/m²

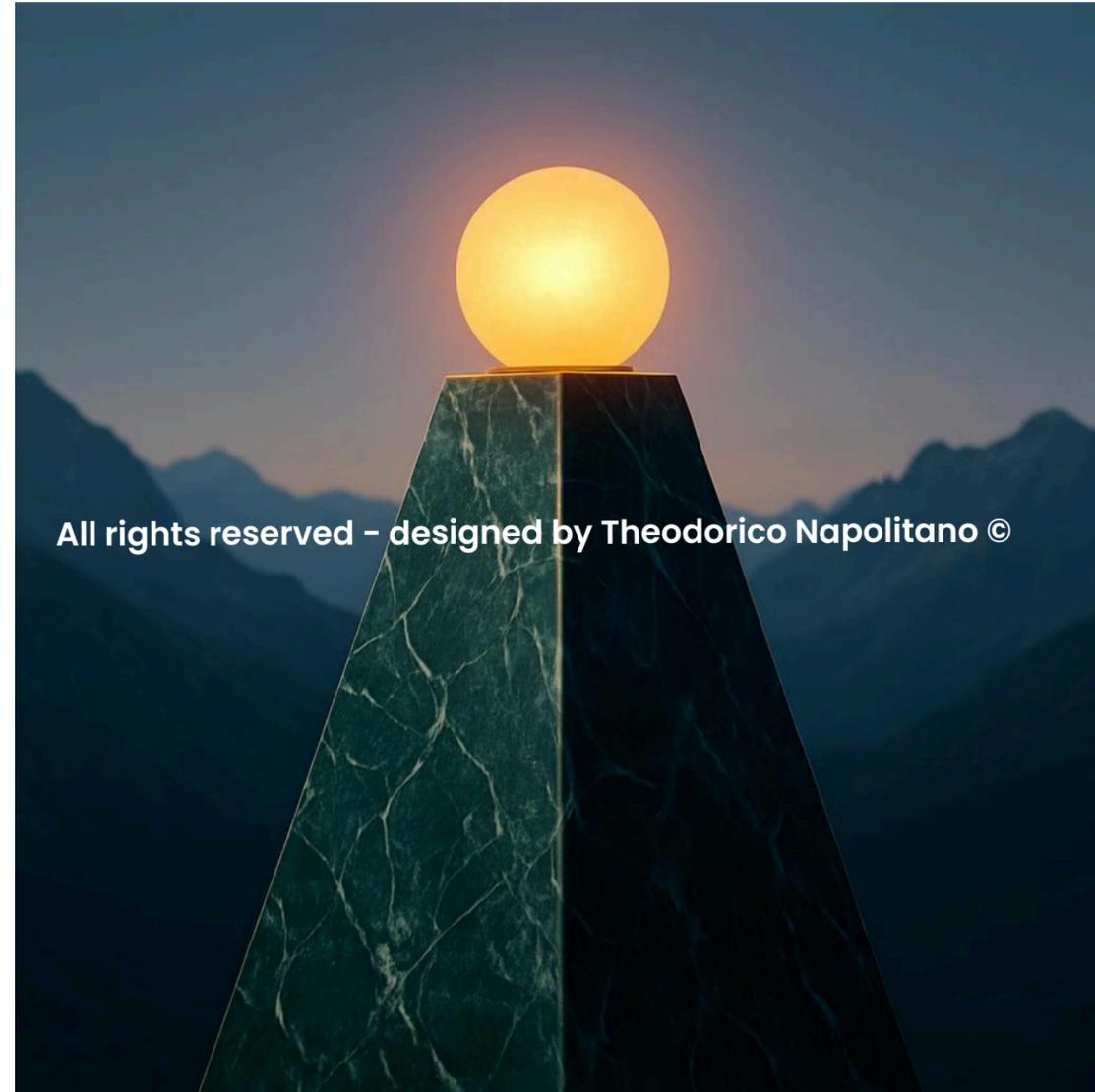




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NE TE QVAESIVERIS EXTRA

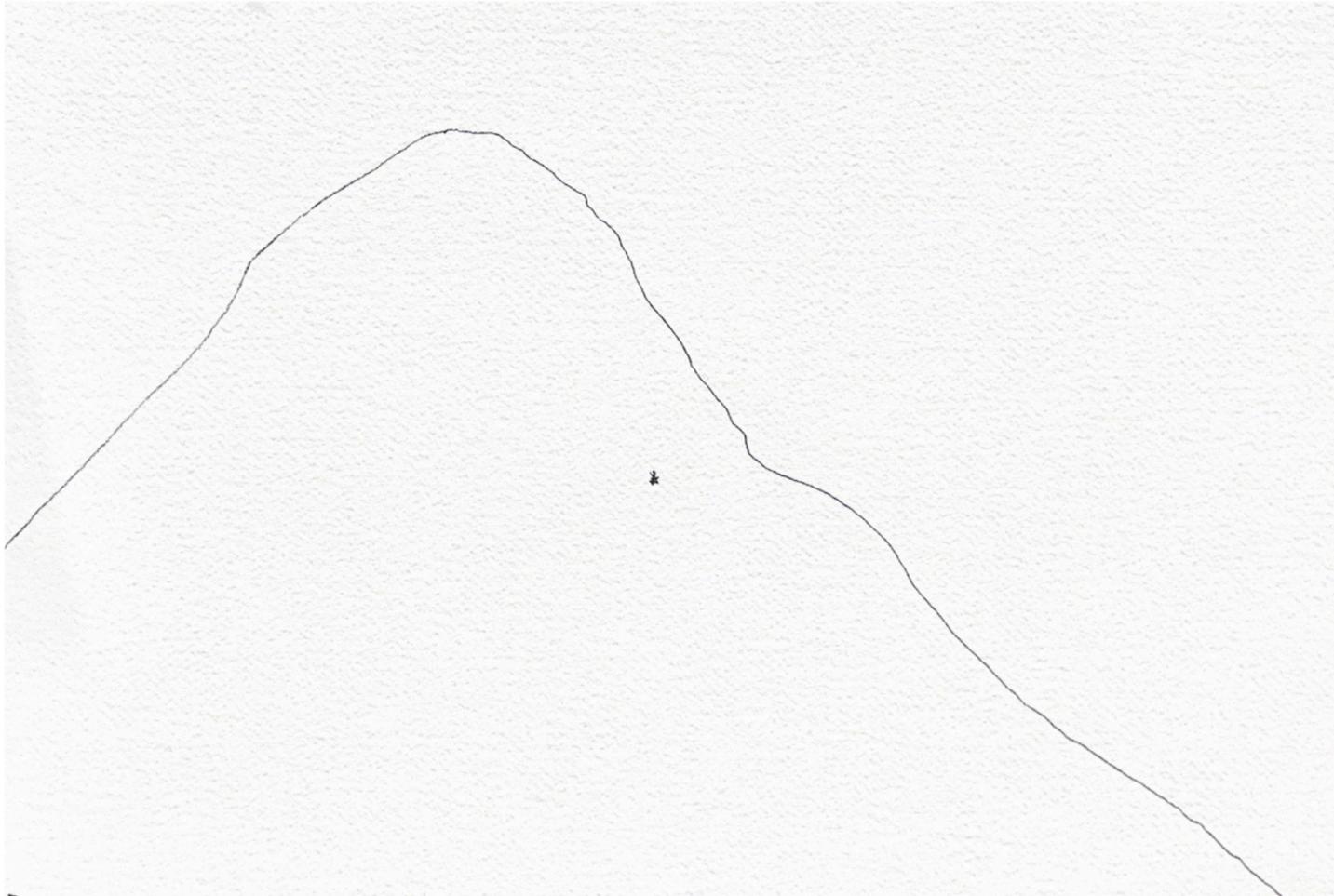
3D render – Cupboard in foamed polycarbonate – photo poster 40x40



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SI SEDES NON IS

3D render – Cupboard in foamed polycarbonate – photo poster 40x40



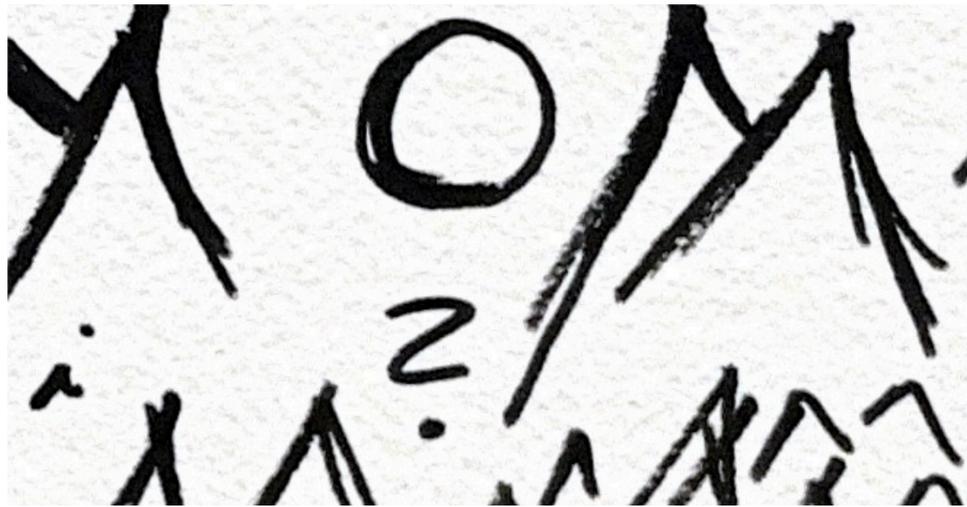
Selfish me
ink and lapis on paper
300 g/m²



Selfish him
ink and lapis on paper
300 g/m²

Journey
Watercolor and lapis on
300gr paper 210 mm x 297 mm





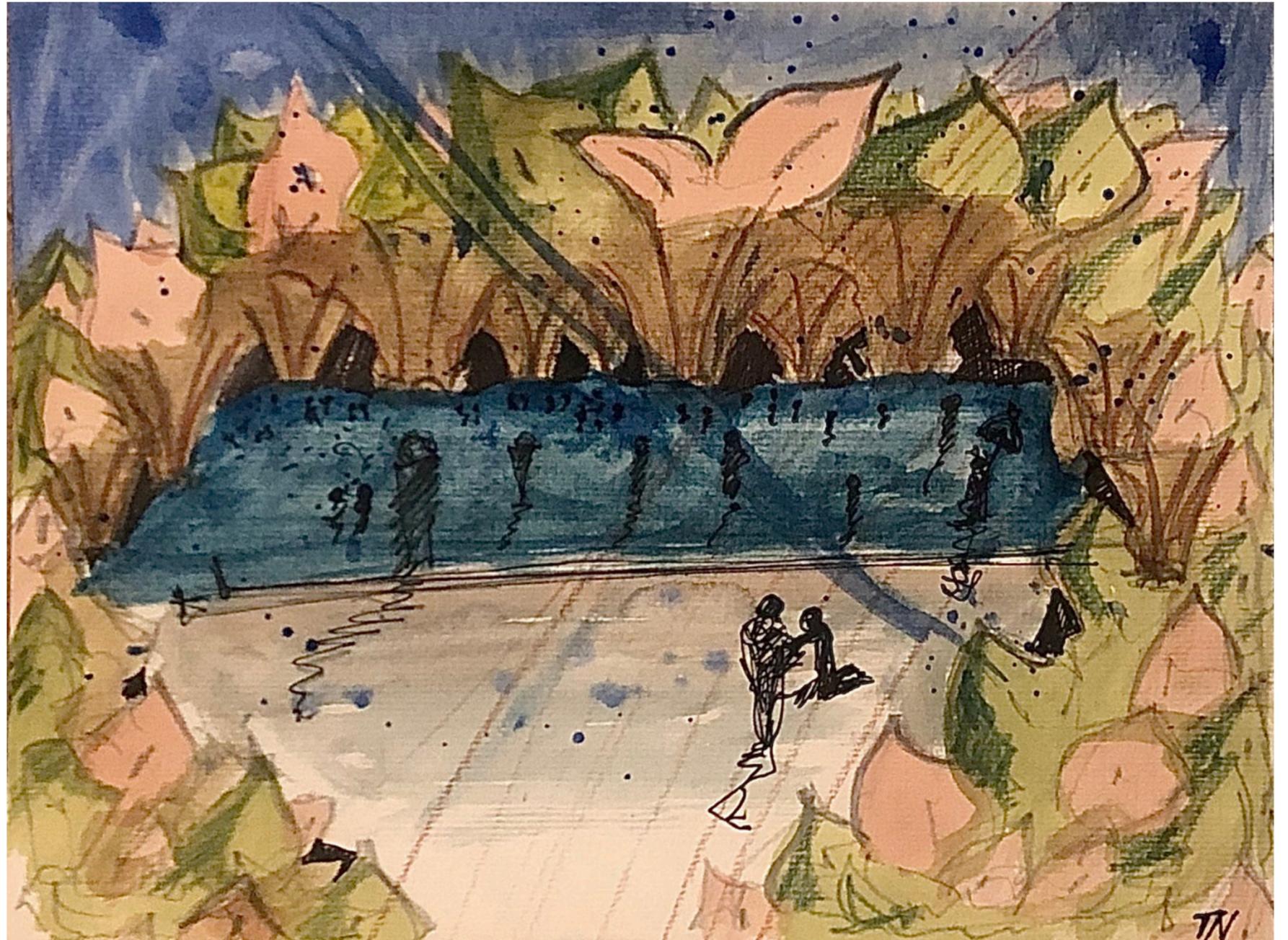
Manifesto
Freehand drawing on paper
46 × 31 cm
300 g/m²

Olimpic torch
3D render - cupboard photo-poster
40x40 on polycarb base



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Gladéa
watercolor on paper
300 gr - 210 x 297 mm





Oralma
watercolor on wood
100x60 cm

ABOUT

THEODORICO NAPOLITANO

An Italian-German artist and architect, passionate about composition at every scale—from urban contexts to everyday design—he approaches complex design processes through both creative and managerial perspectives. Specializing in supporting Italian and international entrepreneurs in the design of physical spaces, he graduated from the Politecnico di Milano in Architectural and Urban Design and furthered his studies abroad at HCU Hamburg (Arts and Baukunst) and LaSalle Barcelona (Urban Design). Raised in a family of artists, he inherited from the German poet and artist Christine Gansen-Hainze a passion for storytelling rooted in representation; from his father, the architect Gabriele Napolitano, he learned a rational approach to the architectural landscape and the practice of large mixed-media canvases made with recycled construction materials, blending restoration and creation into a single projective gesture. He refined his watercolor technique and deepened his study of light in the Hamburg atelier of painter Uli von Boch, developing an interest in capturing luminosity within abstract architectural works. He also trained in life drawing, studying proportions and the functional interaction between the human body and material. His collaboration with Ryan Mendoza, with whom he worked as art director, brought him closer to photography and to an art form that blends the absurd with the existential—an experience for which he feels profound admiration and gratitude, having deeply transformed his life. Dialogues with Massimo Minini ultimately gave direction and awareness to his investigation into artistic material; to him, he also expresses deep gratitude for transforming his vision into a clear purpose.

Artista e architetto italo-tedesco, appassionato di composizione su ogni scala — dall'ambito urbano al design quotidiano — affronta processi progettuali complessi con un approccio creativo e gestionale. Specializzato nel supportare imprenditori italiani e internazionali nella progettazione di spazi fisici, si è laureato al Politecnico di Milano in Architectural and Urban Design e ha approfondito gli studi all'estero presso l'HCU di Amburgo (Arts and Baukunst) e LaSalle di Barcellona (Urban Design). Cresciuto in una famiglia di artisti, ha ereditato dalla poetessa e artista tedesca Christine Gansen-Hainze la passione per lo storytelling legato alle rappresentazioni; dal padre, l'archistar Gabriele Napolitano, ha appreso un approccio razionale al paesaggio architettonico e l'uso di grandi tele in tecnica mista realizzate con materiali di cantiere, trasformando restauro e creazione in un unico gesto progettuale. Ha affinato il tratto acquerellistico e lo studio della luce nell'atelier ad Amburgo del pittore Uli von Boch, interessandosi a catturare luminosità in architetture astratte, e si è formato nella rappresentazione del nudo artistico, studiando proporzioni e l'interazione funzionale del corpo con la materia. L'incontro con Ryan Mendoza, con cui ha lavorato come art director, lo ha avvicinato alla fotografia e a un'arte che mescola assurdo ed esistenzialismo — per la cui influenza nutre infinita stima e gratitudine, avendogli profondamente cambiato la vita. I dialoghi con Massimo Minini hanno infine dato direzione e consapevolezza alla sua ricerca sulla materia artistica; anche a lui rivolge immensa riconoscenza per aver trasformato la sua visione in uno scopo.



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